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Centennial Oration.

1758-1858.



ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

Evacuation of Fort Duquesne.

BY

HON. A. W. LOOMIS.

Pittsburgh, November 25, 1858.

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Wife of
Hon. George S. Willard.

{ Boston.

(Aug. 1828)

O R A T I O N.

WE have assembled to celebrate a remote event in our local history. We have selected as the appropriate theatre of that celebration, the precise position of its occurrence. The presence of unnumbered thousands denotes the deep, pervading and universal interest of the occasion. In its presence, conflict of opinion and collision of interest are forgotten. Discarding all considerations that could alienate our sympathies or sever our efforts, with one heart and one mind, with kindred feelings and identical views, we cordially and sincerely unite in honor of an event deeply affecting our common destiny.

Although that event occurred in a wilderness of the Western Hemisphere, it vibrated through the heart of a transatlantic empire. It was the precursor of defeat to cherished hopes and gigantic schemes of extended dominion. It was conspicuous in a series of causes involving in clouds and darkness the cheering visions of anticipated conquest, and arresting by impassable and permanent barriers, the previously successful march of triumphant encroachment. It was a medium through which the intelligent statesman and sagacious warrior

of the Old World, could readily discern the ultimate fate of his country's fortunes in the New.

The mingled influence of the sceptre and the cross, had with ceaseless industry and persevering effort, amid privation and sufferings, diffused the power and dominion of France over the regions of the North, and along the vales and streams of the South, to the waters of the Gulf. She had established a cordon of posts and military lodgments extending from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, excluding the authority, and defying the power of England. She had seized and fortified this interesting spot, previously selected by a youthful and sagacious eye, and designated by an accurate and almost unerring judgment, as an eligible position for the protection of his country's interests. In this fortress, France held the key which opened the way to the fertile regions of the West, and devised and concentrated the means of annoyance and destruction to approaching settlements from the East. By her appliances, enlisted and cherished here, she added to the terrors of civilized warfare the horrors of savage ferocity and cruelty. Her rude fortification upon the banks of the Ohio, seemed as inaccessible as the walls of Troy. Its repellent forces arrested every hostile approach. Defeated and disgraced, her enemies were repeatedly compelled to trace with reluctant steps their path across the solitary mountains. The disgraceful surrender of Grant had dishonored a beautiful elevation, now crowned by the lofty temples of justice and religion. An inglorious defeat had rendered the blood

of Braddock a fruitless sacrifice, on the banks of the Monongahela. No monument has been reared to mark the spot or perpetuate the memory of the event. The traveler, borne upon the fleeting train with a momentum causing the ashes of the slain to tremble in their repose, passes, without recognition, the memorable field. A brilliant victory on the Plains of Abraham, consecrated the blood of Wolfe, and rendered his name immortal. As the stranger approaches the lofty citadel of Quebec, his eyes rest upon a beautiful monument, erected to perpetuate the memory of Wolfe and Montcalm. Having passed the walls of the city, when approaching the Plains of Abraham, he beholds in the distance a slender column, marking the spot where the illustrious warrior expired. Having reached the interesting object, his eager eye is fixed upon the sublime and appropriate inscription, still legible, though corroded by time, and obscured by depredation, "Here he died, Wolfe, victorious." Such are the results of success and failure, of triumph and defeat.

The reputation of England had been dishonored by the fate of her enterprises and the defeat of her purposes. Her arms had ingloriously yielded to French strategy and Indian atrocity. Her settlements had been ravaged, her subjects plundered and slaughtered; misfortune and dishonor rested upon her projects, her efforts and her fame. Neither safety nor security dwelt under the protection of her civil or military administration; the objects of government had failed; the results of toil, subordination and suffering, had proved fruitless

and unavailing. Even lofty mountains and trackless wastes had proved no protection against hostile encroachment. The torch, the scalping-knife and the blaze of conflagration, were familiar objects of sight and terror, east of the Alleghenies. To the English colonist, Fort Duquesne appeared to be the fruitful source of unnumbered woes and direful misfortunes. A long series of calamities, alike unexpected and deplored, had humbled his pride, and saddened his heart. No cheering ray illumined his path or animated his hopes. The objects around him were shrouded in the dark shades of anticipated suffering; his thoughts and feelings were tinged with the melancholy hue of expected calamity.

But from the disastrous field of Braddock, moistened by the blood of unfortunate heroes, sprang a fame and renown, shedding a lustre over the sombre scenes and disastrous events of our early history. A youthful warrior appeared, whose daring deeds, determined courage and conspicuous wisdom, justly awakened lofty and universal admiration. A man of God, with prophetic tongue and fervent hope, by prediction alike happy and truthful, designated him as the elect of Providence, protected and preserved through the clustering perils of the deadly conflict, to be the future saviour of his country.

The long series of calamities and misfortunes, sickening to hope, and paralyzing to effort, had reached its termination. Brighter days and fairer prospects were about to dawn upon these then desolate and cheerless

valleys. The light of new events, and the fruition of more propitious hopes, were soon to cheer the heart of the soldier and the pioneer. The pride of England was awakened; her energies and those of her colonies were effectually aroused. Her military forces were organized and approaching. They were sufficient in numbers and adequate in courage to the accomplishment of her determined purpose. Victory or death, was the theme of every tongue, and the resolve of every heart. The fixed design of dislodging at once and forever, from this formidable and favorite entrenchment, the capacities of French and Indian annoyance, nerved the arm and controlled the will of every soldier. The advance of the army was regarded by the mother country with trembling anxiety, and by the colonies with fearful interest. The resolute commander had been borne from the Delaware to the Monongahela upon a litter; he was prostrated by suffering, but resolved to execute the purposes and meet the expectations of his country. When advised to retrace his steps, giving vent to the invincible impulse of his heroic spirit, he profanely but solemnly declared, that "on the following night he would sleep in the fort or in hell!" His troops were reposing on the banks of a neighboring stream, preparatory to a final assault on the morrow; when, on the eventful night preceding the day whose anniversary we celebrate, the reverberations of a terrific explosion awoke them from their slumbers. The enemy had departed; and on the 25th of November, one hundred years ago, the cross of St. George floated for the first time over the deserted ramparts and desolate

walls of Fort Duquesne. French domination, passing from the light of conflagration to the shades of returning darkness, descended the beautiful river, never to return. The foot of the foe had pressed for the last time the soil on which we stand.

The lordly savage roaming upon the hill-tops, or gliding upon the unruffled surface of the quiet waters, beheld with silent amazement or with stoic indifference, the scenes which witnessed the approaching power of England and the departing dominion of France. The eye of civilized man scarcely looked out upon the events of a century ago. The rivers glided onward in their courses; the forests waved in token of sympathy; and nature smiled upon the passing scene. Though the shout of triumph may have resounded through the smoking ruins of the deserted fort, though an autumnal sun may have shone out upon a landscape of varied charms and transcendent beauty; though the gladdened heart may have leaped for joy, and the delighted voice may have poured forth the tribute of awakened gratitude and fervent devotion; cultivation, improvement and freedom, were not there. Powers, elements and appliances, now yielding their rich treasures to the dominion and happiness of our race, then reposed among the undivulged mysteries of nature. The wonders of steam and electricity had not been developed upon the ocean or the land. Jefferson had not penned that immortal record of liberty, the Declaration of Independence; the sword of Washington had not been drawn in defense of liberty; Madison,

Hamilton and Jay, had not shed over the almost perfect creations of political wisdom the matchless light and resistless power of their transcendent intellects; the fathers of the republic had not given to the practical administration of the most perfect government which the world ever beheld, the benign and successful influence of their pure morality, their enlightened wisdom and devoted patriotism.

Even after the conquest of Fort Duquesne, this precious heritage of freedom was under the influence of royal authority and foreign dominion. The throne, the crown and the sceptre, were then revered as the just pride of regal power and the significant symbols of legitimate authority. That national emblem beneath whose gorgeous folds the American soldier, regardless of danger and reckless of life, will march wherever duty or honor may call, had never floated over "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

But the results of the conquest cannot now be fully appreciated. The concomitant and surrounding events gave to success a charm, a fascination, an overpowering influence that cannot now be realized. In the dim and hazy distance of departed years, the effect may be faintly imagined, but it can never be truly felt. The honor of the country was redeemed, and its authority vindicated; its flag floated over an undisputed and undisturbed sovereignty. French authority had made its final retreat. Savage atrocity was rebuked, disarmed and restrained.

It never again re-crossed the mountains, or exhibited its horrors in the valleys of the East. It continued, for a brief period, a struggle waning in energy and diminishing in success, until the effectual prostration of its strength compelled a retirement to the wilds of the West. Relieved from the presence of hostile power and fatal danger, these fertile and healthful valleys soon invited the approach of the settler. They presented inducements to emigration, and promised rewards to cultivation, which soon secured the presence and the influence of the arts and improvements of civilized life. In their train soon followed the protection of government and the blessings of civilization. Within ten years after the abandonment of the fort, the government was enabled to open the immense and fertile regions of the West to applications, survey and settlement. And even now conclusive evidence of the route of the gallant Forbes exists upon the original surveys reposing among our public records.

Surrounded by the same lofty hills that witnessed the events we celebrate, beholding the same beautiful stream that bore upon its placid surface the retiring power of a hostile nation, we look back upon the wonders of a departed century. But, thanks to Almighty God, the proud flag of England no longer waves over our free and happy soil. The throne, the crown and the sceptre have yielded to the acknowledged and practical sovereignty of the people. Subjection and obedience to despotic power and foreign dominion, have been supplanted by the genial influence and awakening impulse of equal

laws and liberal institutions. Free as the air which he breathes, the American citizen walks abroad, in the dignity of his nature, to the fulfillment of his appropriate destiny. A potential and essential element in the great aggregate of state and national sovereignty, he performs the functions of his position with an intelligent regard to the fortunes, the prosperity and happiness of himself and his descendants. The interests of his country, interwoven with the integrity and security of all the safeguards of freedom and protection, will ever challenge and command his most faithful allegiance and devoted efforts. Individual safety and security, so happily and intimately blended with the political organization and practical administration of our complex system of government, will ever be operative and influential agencies in the promotion of the general prosperity.

The theatre of this celebration is at the entrance of one of the most extraordinary regions of the earth. Genial in clime, fertile in soil, and fruitful in resources, the great Valley of the Mississippi is the most noble, expanded and glorious heritage of freedom that ever benignant Heaven vouchsafed to man. In its capacious bosom beats the heart of a mighty empire. Successively the theatre of savage and despotic sway, it is now the seat of disciplined and invincible power. The world in arms could neither intimidate its heroic defenders, or subvert its well established liberties. Its powers of defense are adequate to any emergency; its faculties of resistance transcend the capacity of any encroachment.

Far removed from the combinations and the despotism of the Old World, enthroned in the affections of her children, the Goddess of Liberty may well delight to dwell in this Paradise of freedom.

It is due to the place and the occasion, to the merits of the present and preceding generations, to the truth of history and the progress of improvement, that we should contrast the present with the past, the smoking ruins of a deserted fort with the powers, capabilities, energies and improvements of a populous and prosperous city; that we should note the growth and progress of the political, physical and intellectual changes which a century has wrought; that we should pay a sincere and grateful tribute to the worthy and influential efforts of the living and of the dead, in producing the rich results of a century's suffering and experience; that we should glance at the growth of our city, the progress of our venerated commonwealth, and the prosperity of our glorious Union.

A century ago, these beautiful hills, and vales, and streams, passed from the rule of one foreign sovereignty to that of another; from the crown of France to that of England. Fort Pitt arose, like a phoenix, from the ashes of Fort Duquesne; and Pittsburgh, like a wild flower in the wilderness, sprang up by its side.

The flag which floated over the ramparts of Fort Pitt, was an emblem and symbol of monarchical power and

foreign domination. King, lords and commons, more than three thousand miles distant, claimed and exercised executive and legislative sovereignty over this colonial dependency; the influence of the King and his parliament was felt and acknowledged over regions now consecrated to freedom. I once saw a venerable man approach the book in yonder temple of justice, who in his detail of ancient events, declared that even *here* he had been an apprentice to the King's baker. With what indignation and amazement would the sturdy freeman *now* listen to a proposal to apprentice his son to a minion of royalty!

A century ago, primeval and almost unbroken forests waved over the scenes which surround us; the streams glided onward in silence, save when the frail bark of the Indian rippled the surface of their quiet waters; the wonders of art and of science, the efforts of genius and industry, had not shed their benign influence over the scene; no lofty spire pointed to heaven in token of man's submission or devotion, of his hopes or his fears, of his fall or his elevation. True, the voice of God was heard in the distant thunder, his power was displayed in the terrific lightning; but the voice of his ministers was not heard in the temple of worship. In this distant region no government existed but that of the sword; ultimate sovereignty dwelt beyond the waters of the ocean. The treasures of our hills and valleys reposed in obscurity, unnoticed and almost unknown. Our forests appeared rather as the embellishments of a grace-

ful scene, than the sources of wealth and improvement. Our mines, if known, were regarded as idle and useless elements among the wonders of an incomprehensible creation. Our rivers gratified the eye by their beauty, but yielded no facilities to the burthens of commerce or the delights of travel and adventure. Man lived and moved and had his being, but was clothed with few of the powers, faculties and advantages which now expand his influence, elevate his position and multiply his enjoyments.

We recognize, we appreciate, by observation and experience, and by the countless evidences which are presented to our attention, the condition of the *present*; but no patriarch, made venerable by a life of centuries, lives to tell us of the condition of the *past*. No eye which beholds the scenes now before us, beheld the events of seventeen hundred and fifty-eight. But though the patriarchal age is past, and longevity has, by the fiat of Heaven, been curtailed of its fair proportions, he who has attained to three-score years and ten has beheld more progress and improvement than Adam during the nine hundred and thirty, or Methusaleh during the nine hundred and sixty-nine years of his life.

It would be folly and presumption in me to attempt to present to this enlightened audience the details of our present condition. They are patent to every eye, the theme of every tongue, the delight of every heart. The wealth, the power, the resources, improvements and

achievements of this city, are intimately known and correctly appreciated by the numerous intelligent and enterprising citizens who have so long mingled and participated in the triumphs and conquests which have given to skill and enterprise a capacity of production, an extent of market, and a demand for consumption, that have laid broad and deep the stable foundations of capital, rewarded the active and patient efforts of toil, given to persevering industry the just recompense of comfort and abundance, covered our hills and valleys with the abodes of manly independence, reared in our midst the structures of art, the halls of learning, the temples of religion and the mansions of wealth and refinement.

These honored citizens have, by their successful industry and cautious enterprise, by their high and noble career of honor, given to our city a reputation for safety, security and stability, unsurpassed in the Union. During the terrific monetary convulsion which so recently swept like a tornado over the Old World and the New, scarce a single citizen of Pittsburgh yielded to its pressure. Credit, like the tall and sturdy oak, bowed for a time before the fury of the blast; but, sustained and strengthened by the honorable efforts and faithful integrity of these worthy citizens, it soon regained its former erect and elevated position. The diffusion of intelligence among the masses of our citizens; the liberal encouragement of arts, science and invention; the mighty agency of steam in the abridgment of labor, the economy of

time, and the increase of production ; faithful and persevering industry ; frugality and economy in raiment, habitations, and enjoyments of life ; are among the productive causes which have wrought the wonderful changes of a departed century—which have planted upon the site of a deserted fort and an almost unbroken wilderness, a city whose wealth and influence attest an honorable present, and betoken a successful and triumphant future.

Over all these delightful scenes are thrown the supremacy of law and the majesty of justice. Around them exists a military organization of citizen soldiers, identified with the people in feeling and interest, whose strong arms and heroic spirits will fearlessly mingle in terrific encounter, whenever and wherever conflict may come ; and who will ever stand watchful guardians and faithful sentinels over the rights of property and the security of liberty. We have the authority of Washington himself, that in the disgraceful and disastrous defeat of Braddock, the regular troops, the minions of royalty, fled like sheep before hounds ; while the native-born soldier, who had a home and a country to protect, manfully stood his ground, or gloriously fell, in the discharge of his duty. Should the citizen soldiers whose presence has so appropriately honored this occasion, ever be called to the field, the remembrance of the past, the obligations of the present, and the hopes of the future, will all conspire to secure a faithful and heroic discharge of duty. The citizen soldier will ever, in a republic, be found the sure

and certain guardian and protector of the law, whose wholesome restraints are so essential to the preservation of liberty.

The historian has told us that when the treachery and oppression of James the Second had driven him from his throne and kingdom, and William of Orange was approaching his deserted crown and sceptre, among the distinguished men who met and welcomed him to England, was the veteran Maynard, who, at the age of ninety years, retaining his faculties in their pristine vigor and youthful energy, was confessedly the leader of the Bar of that nation. William, beholding with astonishment the extraordinary man and his wonderful capacity, remarked, "Mr. Sergeant, you must have survived all the lawyers of your standing." "True," replied the ready and courtly advocate, "and had it not been for your Highness, I should have survived the laws, too." All history has taught us, my friends, that he who has survived the laws will soon learn that he has survived also the liberties of his country.

Even a cursory notice of the tribes of aborigines who once dwelt upon this favored land, whose memories have descended the broad stream of authentic history or the devious currents of doubtful tradition, would transcend the legitimate limits of the present discourse. That powerful combination, the Six Nations of Indians, once scattered over a large portion of the English colonies, is broken; and the remnants of the tribes have

scarce an existence in the wilds of the West. They have disappeared before the march of civilization. Not an individual of the aboriginal race remains upon our soil. Alliquippa, Shingiss, Gyasutha, Pontiac—braves, women, children, and their descendants—all, all have departed; and most of them have gone to the spirit-land. The few who linger behind and are scattered over the regions of the West, are the descendants of those who in years long past and gone cast a lingering glance upon the graves of their fathers, and dispirited and hopeless wended their sad and solitary way to new hunting-grounds in the regions of the setting sun. Forgetting their vices and cruelties, and cherishing only the remembrance of their manly virtues and generous deeds, the pale-face may appropriately drop the tear of sympathy and sorrow for their sad but inevitable fate. Their presence, their power and their habits, would have been insuperable barriers to the march of civilization. The antagonist races could not dwell upon the same soil or exist under the same government. Among the compensations of their departure, are the presence of refinement and the triumphs of religion, where once were heard only the shouts of revelry and the echoes of the chase. All the virtues of civilized society may well unite in grateful acknowledgments for their success and triumphs in a land whose soil was once subject to the sole dominion of the red man. With ardent sympathy and generous remembrance, we express the fervent hope that the blessings of civilization may alleviate their future condition, and that their final destiny may be happier

than a joyful return to the hunting-grounds of their fathers.

English dominion over the abandoned fort and deserted territory was of short duration. The privations and sufferings which marked the struggles between the contending powers of France and England soon inured to the benefit of a rising Republic. Excluding and repelling the authority of the Old World, that Republic planted its victorious standard upon the ruins of all foreign dominion. The fires which slumbered in the ashes of Fort Duquesne were scarcely extinguished before the embers of the Revolution were kindled. The animating, guiding and leading spirit of that Revolution, he whose name and deeds were destined to become the wonder and admiration of the world, had already fleshed his sword and signalized his valor upon the disastrous field of Braddock. The same sagacious and youthful eye which in 1753 beheld from yonder eminence, and disclosed to his countrymen, the advantages of this spot as a military position, saw at an early day the approaching conflict with the mother country. Though a faithful subject of the King, he was ready to peril his life in a struggle for freedom. He had seen in the cool and desperate determination with which his beloved regiment had fought on the banks of the Monongahela, a sure presage of the manly fortitude and courageous firmness with which his countrymen in after years struggled against the tyranny of the sovereign for whose cause and honor his devoted comrades fought and fell. He saw in the honored and manly spirit of those who had

fallen in supporting the claims of royalty a sure evidence of the determined spirit and fearless devotion with which their survivors afterward achieved the liberties of their country. When the fullness of time was come; when tyranny and oppression became insupportable; when the public intelligence became enlightened, and the public will fixed and determined; when maturely weighed and considered, the hopes, the probabilities and the blessings of freedom became in the estimation of the people a counterpoise to the blood and carnage and suffering that must inevitably follow a forcible rupture of the existing relations of the colonies and the mother country ; and when, at last, our courageous and patriotic ancestors threw into the trembling scale their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor, and boldly resolved to strike for freedom ; the assembled representatives of the nation deliberately sundered the ties which had connected us with the British crown ; and Pennsylvania, doffing the habiliments of Colonial dependence, became a free and sovereign State, appropriately termed the Keystone of the Federal Arch. From that moment, all dependence upon foreign authority ceased; from that instant, this favored and happy region was relieved from the burden and influence of all dominion save that of our own country. The power of the Indian had ceased; French domination had departed, and British dominion was subverted; no foreign flag has since waved over these hills and valleys ; and surely the strong arms and heroic spirits of our citizens will never permit the approach of a similar indignity.

In the establishment of a free and independent State,

we realized a natural and legitimate result of the event which we celebrate. The power of England had been successfully applied to the extermination of the sovereignty of France, and the preparation of a most interesting theatre for the enjoyment of freedom upon the extinction of her own authority. When that happy event arrived, well might the hardy pioneer rejoice in the utter overthrow of both French and English domination; well might he look to both events as kindred, connected and essential causes of the great results which secured to him and his descendants the enjoyment of life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness. If he beheld not the raging flames or mouldering ruins of Fort Duquesne, well might he regard the soil of freedom as blessed and enriched by the diffusion of its ashes. As the Israelite pointed his descendants to the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, to the passage of the sea, the wilderness and the Jordan, as among the predetermined events which marked his passage to the Promised Land; so might the pioneer who dwelt on these hills and valleys have pointed his descendants to the defeat of Braddock, the surrender of Grant, and the desertion of Fort Duquesne, as fore-ordained and essential events marking his successful advent to freedom and his happy deliverance from the power of his enemies. We, the descendants and successors of the hardy and heroic men who have gone before, may well regard the occasion which we celebrate as a *golden* link in the lengthened chain of events that connects our happy destiny with the dependence and sufferings of the past.

When Pennsylvania became an independent State, this favored region and its inhabitants became a portion of her soil and sovereignty. Our fame and our fortunes became identified with hers. Every blow aimed at her prosperity and honor is leveled at us. Every cause that augments her power and resources, elevates her reputation, or extends her influence, is felt in every effort of our enterprise and every pulsation of our hearts. Thus connected, united and identified, well may we dwell for a moment, on this occasion, upon her history. In the revolutionary conflict, in the organization of government, in the protection of the lives, liberty and security of her citizens, in the promotion of their interests and prosperity, her energies have been faithfully, and in most instances successfully exerted. She has been prompt and faithful in the discharge of her duties to the Federal Union, in every department of government and upon every theatre of action. In the judicial tribunals, in the halls of legislation, and in the conflicts of war, her children have left proud memorials of their wisdom, their eloquence and valor. She has contributed her share to the support of government and the rewards of enterprise. In the construction of the great system of roads which has connected the remote East with the waters of the Mississippi, and is destined to reach the shores of the Pacific, the energies of her citizens have been nobly and successfully exerted. In her midst arose lofty mountains which seemed to interpose an insuperable barrier to the accomplishment of the mighty project. Well might the boldest heart and the strongest arm have refrained from the attempt to accomplish this gigantic

enterprise. But the eye of her artists looked confidently upward; and the combined influence of skill and perseverance carried the iron way up the rugged mountain side until further ascent became impracticable. In this emergency, at this critical juncture of the trembling hopes and dubious fortunes of the daring enterprise, her combined and concentrated energies smote the lofty mountain, not as with the spear of Eolus to send forth the struggling winds to vex the ocean and the land, but for the noble and generous purpose of opening through the lofty elevation a grand highway from the shores of the East to the fertile valleys of the West. And now, through the perforated mountain, pours a living tide of travel and a ceaseless flow of commerce, to minister to the enjoyments of life and the success of enterprise through all coming generations. As the native of the West journeys onward to behold for the first time the wonders of the East; as the native of the East, who has long dwelt in the habitations of the West, returns to visit the happy scenes of his youth, or to behold the dwellings or sepulchres of his fathers; having reached the highest practicable elevation of the noblest enterprise of the continent; having passed securely the dark recesses of the mountain; as he emerges into the light of day, his eye rests upon the most sublime and lovely scenes, gilded by the mellow and softened rays of the setting sun. And as he glides onward to the distant scenes of anticipated joys, or to objects hallowed by reverence and affection, he contemplates with grateful emotion and admiring regard this achievement of our venerated Commonwealth.

Among the congratulations of this interesting occasion, this successful enterprise, this noble contribution to national power and public prosperity, may well be cherished and commemorated as among her highest honors.

To the Union, which watches over and protects our national honor and interests, of whose being and power we are a component and essential part, a passing notice is due. Her honor is identified with that of every citizen of the Republic. Her interests are blended with those of every portion of her soil. Her sovereignty, like that of the State, is derived from the people. The object of delegating that sovereignty was to protect and promote interests that could not be protected and promoted by State authority. It was to concentrate the powers, energies and faculties of all in the protection of common rights and the advancement of common interests. A portion of sovereignty, over enumerated objects, was conceded for specific purposes. The world beheld for the first time, in the confederation and the union, the combined and separate action of concurrent, harmonious and independent powers, of distinct systems of government derived from and governing the same people. The Union sprang from a revolution ; its birth was preceded by the throes and convulsions of an empire ; it was baptized in blood, and cradled in carnage ; its youth was marked by privation and suffering ; its growth was signalized by the most heroic efforts and the most generous and self-denying virtues ; its ultimate triumphs gave joy and gladness, stability and prosperity, to thirteen free and independent sovereignties. I shall attempt no detail of that extraor-

dinary struggle; its deeds and triumphs have been recorded upon the page of authentic history. But the value of its achievements was dependent upon the wisdom of their improvement. Unconnected and independent sovereignties, having diverse and discordant interests, they were in danger of perpetual collisions and destructive conflicts. The attainments of united action were in danger of sacrifice to the interests of selfish ambition and local supremacy. So obvious were these perils and dangers, so threatening to the existence and prosperity of the States, that the wisdom and patriotism which had survived the dangers of the field, united and combined in the erection of one of the most wonderful political structures that the world ever saw. The fruits of conquest were consecrated, sanctified and (as we hope) made immortal, in the sanctuary of a written Constitution, uniting in one system all powers, blending all interests, and concentrating all the faculties essential to national prosperity, State protection and individual security. From that Constitution, equaled in its influence and results by no other record since the Revelation of Patmos, sprang the protection and security of that Union under whose inspiring influence unnumbered blessings have been diffused over our country. That Union is worthy of a special remembrance on an occasion like the present, bringing to notice and commemoration a remote event in our history. No government ever produced results affecting so deeply the destiny, and promoting so extensively and universally the well-being, of more than twenty millions of freemen. The Union, having existed

more than eighty years, has become venerable; may it be immortal. Its results have no parallel, its history no counterpart; antiquity knew not its resemblance, our own times have not witnessed its equal. Whether we regard its aims or tendencies, its efforts or consequences; whether we contemplate its object, its progress or its growth; we are filled with admiration. Discarding all the surroundings of royalty, repudiating all the distinctions of caste, position and wealth, scorning tyranny and oppression, resisting encroachment, cultivating peace and harmony, cherishing virtue and morality, it spreads the ægis of its protection over all. No man is above the reach of its justice, or beneath the influence of its power.

Beloved, revered and venerated; commanding the homage of every heart, the acquiescence of every will, the action of every energy; its onward march has been marked by a series of triumphs. From its agencies have sprung the wonders of our history; from causes anomalous and singular, have flowed events most extraordinary and unexpected. What wonder that from such a source should spring the events which have signalized our growth and prosperity; that from chaos and confusion should emanate order and system; from discord and danger, tranquility and security; that on such a soil the tree of liberty should have spread its branches and diffused its fruits over a continent; that from colonial weakness should have sprung national power; that from slender, exhausted resources should have emanated a measure of wealth securing unlimited credit and unbounded confi-

dence; that from the barren rocks and sterile shores of an impoverished coast should have sprung the will and the means to send forth a national and commercial marine that has exhibited our enterprise and displayed our power in every port and upon every sea; that under its protecting influence the hand of toil and the spirit of enterprise have spread over the length and breadth of our land wealth without measure and power without stint.

To the nations of the earth, our national government presents capacities, resources and determination that command universal respect. In our batteries upon the ocean, in our fortifications upon the land, in the armed organization of a military power co-extensive with our national sovereignty, and embracing three millions of citizen soldiers, repose our safety and security.

In our judicial tribunals the citizen has received a measure of protection, the law an accuracy of exposition, and justice a certainty of dispensation, unsurpassed in any age or country. In the supreme judicial tribunal of the Union, the expositions of constitutional law and private right have shed a lustre over our national reputation. In our own commonwealth, the great and worthy men who have adorned the Bench, have dispensed public justice and protected private right, in judicial expositions which will live as long as Justice shall have a votary or the law an admirer.

When the soldier beholds an open way to the highest

honors of rank; when the politician sees the most eminent distinction attained by the virtues and perseverance of those who in early life enjoyed no advantages of power, fortune or friends; when the student fixes his ambitious gaze upon the high places in the halls of learning and the temples of justice, filled by those whose genius and labor have triumphed over all the obstacles of penury and obscurity; when all the varied employments of life behold the results of industry and the accumulations of enterprise subservient to the power and obedient to the will and wants of those by whose efforts they are produced; then will the energies of a free people develop their influence in the production of such events as have signalized the present generation.

Of all the nations of the earth, the citizens of this free Republic enjoy a greater portion of liberty and a larger share of happiness than any other. Cast your eyes on the development of power, the means of accumulation, and manifestations of happiness that shed abroad their influence around you; compare them with the period when the pale and trembling mother, fleeing from the approach of the ruthless savage, pressed her precious offspring to her agitated bosom, as she passed the gates of the rude fortification; when the bold and cautious father kept within reach the unerring rifle to save him from surprise of the subtle Indian, as he sought the precarious means of subsistence for his suffering wife and children; when conflict and carnage marked the struggle of the pale-face and the red man for dominion over

the country which we inhabit and the spot where we stand; when only the frail bark of the Indian glided upon the streams on which the steamer now bears the burthens of commerce or speeds the traveler to the distant scenes of happiness or adventure; when only the footsteps of the savage penetrated the trackless wilds, where now the steam-car—foreshadowed by the vision of the prophet, in the chariots that raged in the streets and ran like the lightning—bears the traveler onward in the pursuits of business or enjoyment.

What object could be more suggestive of contrast, of cultivation and improvement, than the theatre of this celebration? One hundred years ago, the smoking ruins of a deserted fortress presented, upon this spot, a spectacle delightful to the eye and heart of the soldier who had fortunately escaped the perils and carnage of an expected encounter, and who saw in the scenes before him the final fate of French supremacy in these deserted regions. To-day, multitudes of happy and independent freemen assemble here, in one of the most capacious depots of the world, erected to facilitate the exchanges of commerce. From this point, at the head of the beautiful Ohio, the exhaustless treasures of the East are wafted upon the noble stream, to supply the increasing demands of the West. Here, at the termination of the great railway which has surmounted and perforated lofty mountains, the boundless productions of the fertile West are placed upon their sure and speedy transit to the capacious harbors and endless markets of the East. Stimulating

the faculties of production, and augmenting the accumulations of industry, may these expanding exchanges, through all coming time, signalize the diffusion of prosperity and multiply the means of enjoyment.

Here, where a cultivated and enlightened civilization prevails; where stands the lofty temple, instinct with prayer and vocal with praise, upon a theatre once desecrated by Indian depredation and subtle treachery; *here*, on this interesting occasion, ought the influence and results of the Union, signalized and consecrated by the countless blessings which it has diffused around us, to be acknowledged and revered by a happy and grateful people.

Here, on this first and last occasion permitted to those who are now upon the theatre of action, let us, with one heart and one mind, with sincere and fervent affection, implore the choicest blessings of Heaven upon the declining years of the venerable men and women who have participated in the interesting scenes which have marked our history, and who in their passage to the grave still linger in our midst.

The present of our history is full of hope and promise. The eye delights to behold the joyful scenes, the tongue to portray, and the heart to appreciate, the incidents connected with our position. Like the arch of promise, they reflect the mingled glories of the genial shower and the setting sun; they grace the smiling landscape with the

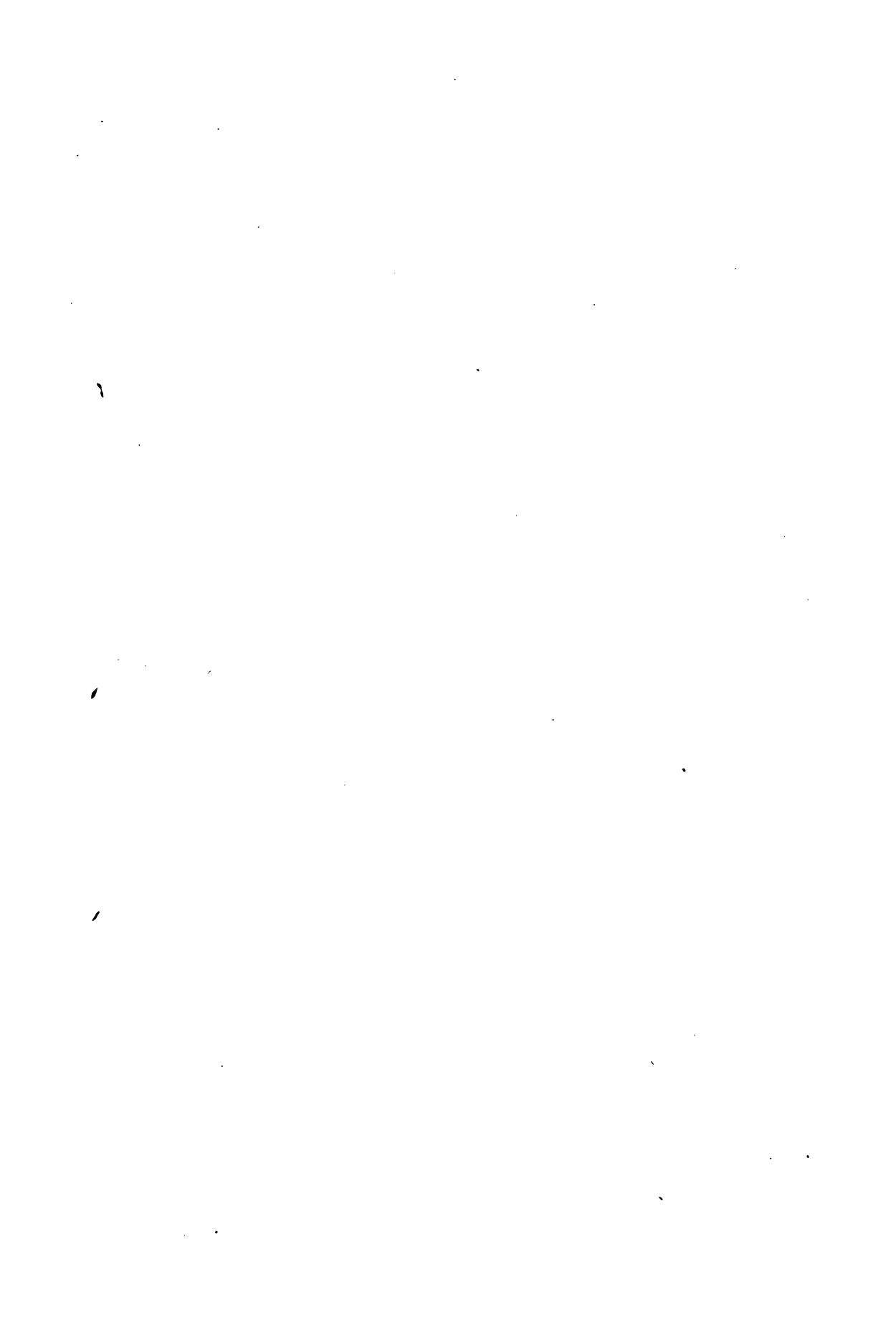
luxuriant verdure of spring, the rich foliage of summer, and the golden leaf of autumn.

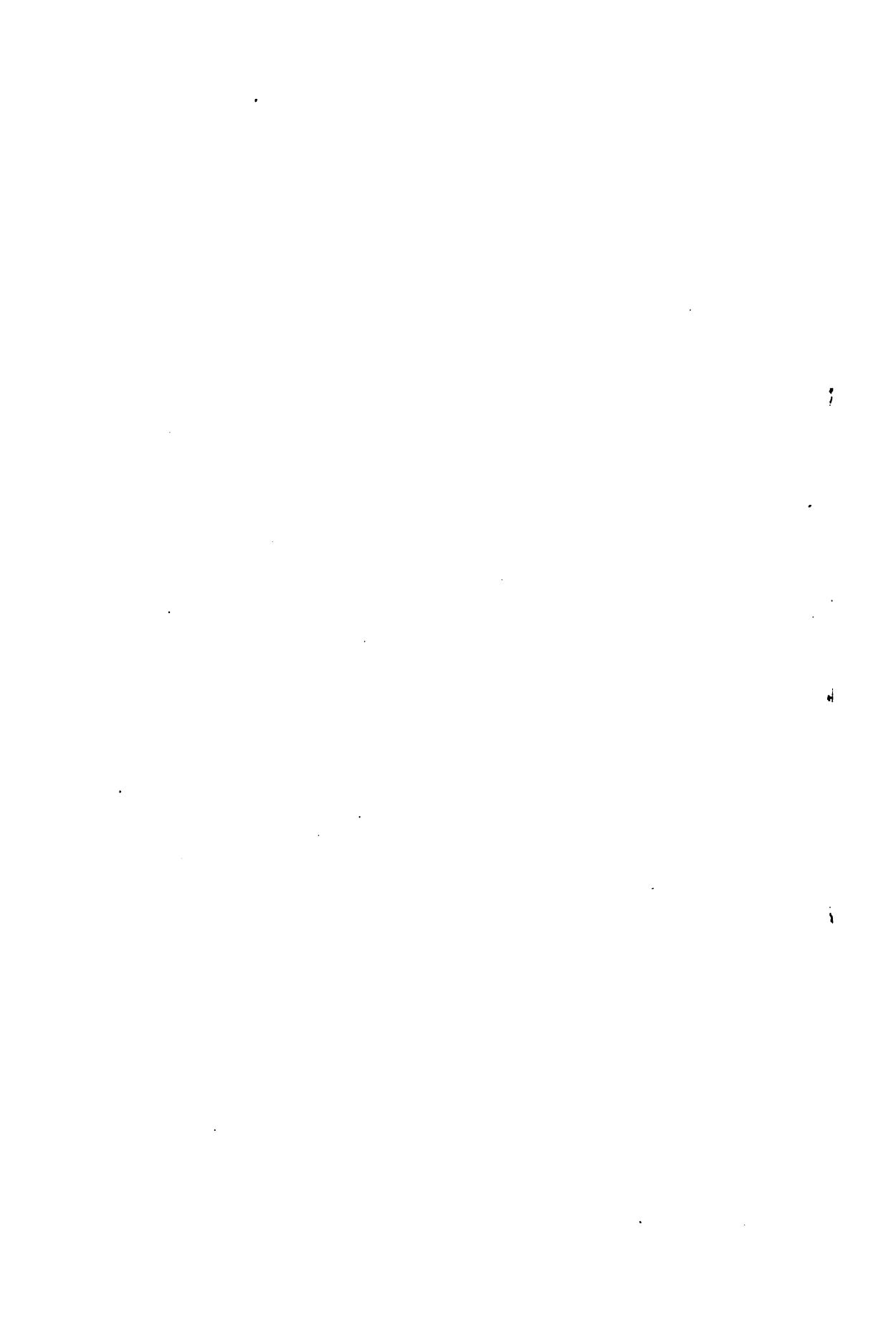
The flow of time is as ceaseless as that of the current of the Father of Waters ; the moments which to-day belong to the eternity of the future, will to-morrow have mingled with the eternity of the past. A hundred years will have passed away before the recurrence of a similar anniversary. A new race will then be upon the theatre of action ; new scenes will be presented to their vision ; and the events of an added century will press upon their contemplation. The eye which beholds existing scenes, will then be closed in darkness ; the tongue which now discourses in joy and gladness, will then be hushed in eternal silence ; the hopes and joys and sorrows that now agitate the bosom, will then have passed into oblivion. Having, in the course of nature and the order of Providence, given place to succeeding generations, the present will then repose in the mansions of the dead. Of the multitudes now dwelling upon our soil, history or tradition may preserve a few scattered memorials ; but the multiplied incidents which make up the everyday life of man, will then be forgotten. We now witness with delight this joyful anniversary ; we shall never witness another.

But imagination delights to roam in the future, to people its airy creations with joyful hopes and cheering anticipations, to behold in the distance the blest abodes of loved descendants. It delights to behold upon the lofty mountain the illumination of a glorious sun ; in the

smiling valley, fruitful fields and perpetual verdure ; in the dwellings of men, unceasing joys and boundless felicity. Even to the devoted Christian, who looks to the bliss of heaven as the great recompence for earthly sorrows, the anticipation of a happy journey for himself and his descendants to that abode, is a consolation and delight. But when with the devotion of the Christian he minglesthe harmonious virtues of the patriot, looking beyond the boundaries of the destiny of himself and of his descendants, he contemplates the great aggregate of hopes and fears, of joys and sorrows, of prosperity and adversity, that lie in the distant future of his country's history ; if, casting his eyes upon the lofty elevation of an occasion like the present, connecting past with future generations, he could behold some venerable seer who could disclose to mortal eye truthful visions of the future, with what trembling and anxiety would he implore a glimpse at the future fortunes of his country. But no seer or prophetic eye graces the occasion ; the mysteries of succeeding ages are sealed, with the utterances of the thunders which the beloved of the Lord was not permitted to write. Still we are permitted to trace analogies. We are justified in believing and predicting that like causes will produce similar results. If, in the course of a departed century, the events which we have described have occurred, and the changes which we have enumerated have been wrought ; if, upon the theatre then controlled by savage or foreign dominion, free governments and liberal institutions have been planted ; if the rights, the security and the happiness of men have been established upon the ruins of despotism and oppression ; if the most

beautiful and perfect political structures which the world ever beheld, have been reared upon the foundations of arbitrary power ; if, protected in the enjoyment of just and equal rights, more than twenty millions of people have consecrated and sanctified a devotion to free government that has never before existed,—have enlisted the popular affections and the popular will in the protection of the political elements and agencies that have produced such astonishing results ; if all those elements and agencies are now in harmonious and successful operation, without a cloud or a shadow resting upon their cheering future ; well may we infer and justly anticipate that, at the expiration of another century, this Republic, rich in the treasures of her people, and richer in the memorials of wisdom, of eloquence and patriotism, which her children shall have contributed to their country's prosperity and renown, will be found pursuing its onward career, with more elevated distinction. And when that joyful epoch shall arrive, well may the fervent imagination of the enraptured patriot anticipate that, in the revolving years and succeeding ages of a glorious future, the institutions of his country, adorned by more lofty virtues, and sustained by more devoted patriotism, will live and bloom and flourish, until all the purposes of creation shall have been accomplished ; until, amid millennial glories the final consummation shall approach, and—the voice of the angel of the Apocalypse resounding over sea and land—the immortal spirit of the last victim of Death, purified and redeemed, shall enter the Paradise of God.









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